



Educator Preparation Program



Practicum Manual

(Effective Fall 2025)

FOREWORD

This manual introduces the conceptual framework, policies, and procedures governing the practicum components of the Shepherd University Educator Preparation Program. It is a comprehensive guide to all field experiences associated with courses in all specializations. It lists responsibilities of facilitating/cooperating teachers, university supervisors/faculty, and teacher candidates.

It is designed to provide teacher candidates, P-12 school personnel, and university employees with information needed to examine coherence across overall practicum experiences and/or to closely examine the policies, procedures, and expectations for any particular practicum.

NOTE: As federal, state, and local policies change, this manual will be updated to reflect those changes accordingly. Consider this a “living document”; any updates/revisions will replace all previously published versions of this document as mandated by such changes at each and all levels respectively.

MAT Candidates: Please refer to the [MAT Student Handbook](#) for specific guidance regarding how these policies apply to your program.

Direct all questions about practicum components to the Coordinator of Educator Preparation, Accreditation, & Compliance [CEPAC].

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EDUC 200

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MUSC 322

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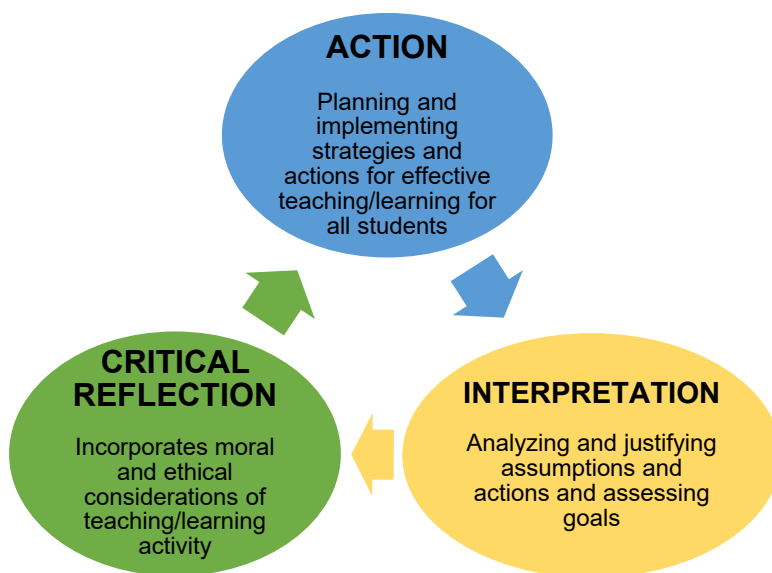
PHILOSOPHY AND THEME OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION AT SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY

TEACHER AS REFLECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVER (TARPS), the conceptual framework providing both the philosophical and practical compass for the Educator Preparation Program [EPP] at Shepherd University, embodies our belief that the complexity of teaching and learning precludes a formulaic approach.

Education should empower all students to make informed choices and to actively participate in the shaping of one's own life as well as the shaping of the social, cultural, political, and economic structures of a democratic society. Teachers facilitate this empowerment. Our purpose in providing practicum experiences throughout the EPP is to facilitate the development of teacher candidates who demonstrate the willingness and capacity for a pedagogy that truly empowers all students in today's diverse P-12 classrooms.

To be reflective, teacher candidates need to deeply understand and be able to articulate their own definitions of teaching as well as reflect on their own learning needs. To effectively respond to the range of concerns found in today's P-12 classroom, teachers need to be concurrently reflective across three fields of consideration: Action, Interpretation, and Critical Reflection.

The teacher examines their **Action** and is concerned with the effective application of pedagogical knowledge and strategies to achieve stated educational goals for every student. This action is subject to **Interpretation**. Here the teacher explicates and justifies the assumptions and predispositions that underlie their teaching/learning activity. During the process of **Critical Reflection**, the teacher assesses the adequacy of the educational goals toward which the educational experience leads and incorporates moral and ethical criteria in assessing the objective outcomes of teaching/learning activities.



In the interplay between coursework and practicum experiences, practicum experiences provide teacher candidates with opportunities to approach teaching by identifying problems, framing them in meaningful contexts, considering alternative solutions, choosing and implementing courses of action, and reflectively analyzing evidence collected to improve outcomes in the ongoing cycle of teaching and learning.

Programmatically, this is accomplished by the interplay between coursework and practicum experiences. Most of the courses in our Professional Education sequence are characterized by a cyclical pattern of attendance in campus-based course/experiences and performance in various field-based sites. This campus-practicum-campus-practicum pattern ensures that each episode of action is followed by a systematic opportunity to reflect on practical experience(s) and the theoretical frameworks that guide practical activities. Practicums are not only opportunities for application but also occasions for critical reflection on the connection between practice and theory/research.

THE ROLE OF THE PRACTICUM IN TARPS

During the freshman year, students take foundational Professional Studies courses that provide experiences to examine the roles and responsibilities of teachers (EDUC 150/MUSC 100); work with diverse learners in a tutoring-type setting (EDUC 200); and establish foundational knowledge critical to future pedagogy depending on their area of specialization (EDUC 333; EDUC 360; ARED 180; PHED 215).

During their sophomore year, teacher candidates embark upon a sequence of courses linked to practicums that focus on the Action-Reflection-Action Cycle. All teacher candidates take EDUC 320 Social and Psychological Conditions of Learning. The various programs then diverge to accommodate specific programmatic needs while maintaining the integrity of the Action-Reflection-Action Cycle. While engaged in these practicum-linked courses, candidates begin taking program-specific courses that focus on increasing specialty area knowledge as related to teaching, curriculum development, and technology, as well as the diverse, inclusive P-12 classroom of the 21st century.

The concluding practicum is a full-time clinical experience. Depending on specialty area and potential added areas of endorsement, the final clinical experience may take place in a single classroom or divided into two separate experiences. For candidates entering after July 1, 2021, the final clinical experience may consist of either one 14-week student-teaching experience (approximately 600 hours in the placement setting) or a Yearlong Residency. For the Yearlong Residency, the first semester will include a minimum of 250 hours across a 14-week placement followed by a second semester that includes approximately 500 hours across a second 14-week placement. *[For further clarification and current requirements, refer to West Virginia Policy 5100 (Section 6.8).]*

| Courses with Practicum Components | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Foundations Courses - All Teacher Candidates | | Level |
| EDUC 150 Seminar in Education Teacher Job Shadow = 8 hours <i>[or MUSC 100 First Year Seminar for Music Majors Only]</i> | | Awareness |
| EDUC 200 Foundations of American Education Service Learning = 20 hours | | Awareness |
| EDUC 320 Social and Psychological Conditions of Learning Theory/Research Focused Observations = 30 hours | | Awareness - Initiative |
| Sequence of Methods Coursework by Program | | Level |
| Elementary Education | Secondary Education | |
| EDUC 358 = 70 hours <i>Elementary Practicum I</i> Co-Requisites: <i>EDUC 341 Math Methods for Elementary Teachers</i> <i>EDUC 355 Reading and Language Arts I</i> <i>EDUC 356 Elementary Science Methods</i> <i>EDUC 357 Elementary Social Studies Methods</i> | EDUC 370 = 70 hours <i>Creating Learning Environments</i> OR MUSC 322/325/326 = 45 hours [Music Only] <i>Instrument/Choral/General Music Pedagogy</i> | Awareness - Initiative |
| | Secondary Methods of Teaching <i>Hours vary depending on specialization area and/or integration with EDUC 370.</i> | Awareness - Initiative |
| | | Initiative - Development |
| EDUC 364 = 250 hours <i>Elementary Residency 1</i> Co-Requisites: <i>EDUC 400 Inclusion in the Regular Classroom</i> <i>EDUC 359 Reading and Language Arts II</i> EDUC 451 = 500 hours <i>Elementary Residency 2</i> Co-Requisite: <i>EDUC 461 Clinical Experience Seminar</i> | EDUC 375 = 250 hours <i>Secondary Education Residency 1</i> Co-Requisites: <i>EDUC 400 Inclusion in the Regular Classroom</i> <i>EDUC 443 Reading in the Content Area</i> EDUC 462/463/464 = 500 hours <i>Secondary Residency 2</i> Co-Requisite: <i>EDUC 461 Clinical Experience Seminar</i> | Development - Integration |

LEVELS DEFINED

1. Awareness: the condition of being cognizant without necessarily acting upon the knowledge; an “awareness” directed by others; information about.
2. Initiative: the condition of acting upon one’s cognizance or awareness in order to create one’s own knowledge.
3. Development: the condition of purposeful application of one’s knowledge in order to create practical and useful outcomes.
4. Integration: the condition of unselfconscious practice; action based on synthesized knowledge; habits of mind.

As teacher candidates advance from Awareness to Integration, university supervisors provide increasingly intensive supervision to support changes in expectations regarding quality and complexity of performance. These increasingly complex levels of knowledge, performance, and dispositions are also supported by the Action-Reflection-Action Cycle built into courses throughout the EPP.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR PRACTICUM PLACEMENT

As per West Virginia state policy, teacher candidates must experience placements in schools with various diversity characteristics for exceptionalities (E), minorities (M), or both (EM). To this end, school system data is used to determine the system-wide average percentages of Exceptional and Minority students. Individual schools with averages higher than the system-wide average percentages for exceptionalities and/or minorities are coded accordingly. A record of placements (e.g., the candidate’s Practicum Profile) is maintained by the School of Education at Shepherd University for each teacher candidate with attention to individual school coding. This process ensures that teacher candidates meet experiential requirements for state certification by having at least two distinct experiences in schools coded E, M, or EM.

Under the direction of the Coordinator of Educator Preparation Program, Accreditation, and Compliance [CEPAC], the Field Placement Coordinator is responsible for contacting partner schools and/or districts to setup practicum placements that are conducive to meeting the requirements for each course while accommodating the needs of participating schools and teachers.

Because each practicum-based course has unique requirements, during the process of identifying appropriate placements, administrators and prospective facilitating/cooperating teachers will be provided with details regarding the number of hours, expectations for both teacher candidate and facilitating/cooperating teacher, contact information for the designated university supervisor, and any relevant and/or necessary literature and forms. **In no case should teacher candidates contact any school directly to set up their own placements.** All teacher candidates within a field placement/practicum must adhere to district and/or school requirements for a current negative TB screening as well as current vaccination policies.

CODE OF CONDUCT: Candidates should follow both school system and university policies as to professional dress and ethical behavior while in the school. Candidates should refer to the dispositional characteristics presented throughout their professional studies courses and confer with their facilitating/cooperating teachers for guidance as needed. For further guidance, please refer to the [Code of Ethics for West Virginia Educators](#), the [Shepherd University Code of Academic Integrity](#), and the School of Education’s [Conceptual Framework](#).

Designated faculty and/or university supervisors are responsible for overseeing the teacher candidates’ fieldwork, observing and evaluating each candidate’s performance, and collaborating with the facilitating/cooperating teacher(s) to insure a positive experience for all. Inquiries that cannot be addressed by the designated university supervisor/faculty should be directed to the CEPAC. **NOTE: All field-based coursework and placements prior to the final clinical placement will occur within the State of West Virginia.**

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS / SYSTEMS

MARYLAND
Frederick County
Washington County

PENNSYLVANIA
Greencastle-Antrim

VIRGINIA
Clarke County
Frederick County
Loudoun County
Winchester City

WEST VIRGINIA
Berkeley County
Grant County
Hampshire County
Hardy County
Jefferson County
Morgan County

TERMINOLOGY

TEACHER CANDIDATE: A **teacher candidate** is a Shepherd University student who is in training to become a teacher. During initial experiences, the teacher candidate is expected to have adequate time as defined by program requirements to observe educational activity in a classroom and dialogue with the cooperating/facilitating teacher and other professionals in the P-12 school building. In later experiences, the teacher candidate will have varying responsibilities for planning, teaching, assessing, and reflecting on student learning. During the final clinical experience, the teacher candidate assumes all duties and teaching responsibilities of the classroom teacher. When in a practicum setting, the teacher candidate should uphold all professional standards for dress and behavior expected of the P-12 classroom teachers.

REFLECTIVE PAIRS: Two teacher candidates may be placed in the same classroom at the same time to promote reflection and collaboration. *[Field-based / pre-clinical experiences only.]*

FACILITATING / COOPERATING TEACHER: The **facilitating or cooperating teacher** is a classroom teacher in a public school (P-12) to whom a candidate is assigned and who has been approved for this responsibility by the school principal/district and the EPPC/CEPAC. Facilitating/cooperating teachers may work with teacher candidates in all phases of their field-based (pre-clinical) and final clinical experiences. Because facilitating/cooperating teachers represent a primary influence on quality candidate training, they must be carefully selected to ensure they possess special competencies and an interest in guiding the growth of prospective and future teachers.

UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR: The **university supervisor** is a person designated by Shepherd University to be responsible for field supervision of the teacher candidate and for coordinating the relationship between the university, the teacher candidate, and the facilitating/cooperating teacher. This person is responsible to the CEPAC. The supervisor's concern is for the teacher candidate(s) to make appropriate progress toward making "habits of mind" of the elements of Shepherd's EPP. General responsibilities of the university supervisor include:

- Developing and maintaining a professional working relationship among and between facilitating/cooperating teachers, school administrators, school staff, and teacher candidates.
- Observing the learning conditions present in field placements/practicum settings.
- Conferring with the teacher candidate and facilitating/cooperating teacher on pertinent observation and performance topics.
- Engaging the teacher candidate in and directing reflective dialogue regarding the practicum experience in whatever form it may take.
- Ensuring the facilitating/cooperating teacher has received appropriate literature/forms to guide and inform their experience.
- Assisting with problems that may arise during the placement/practicum experience. NOTE: Removal of the teacher candidate from a practicum must adhere to procedures as established by the EPP/EPPC at Shepherd University / as outlined herein.
- Visiting the practicum site to observe and, as appropriate, to evaluate teacher candidate(s).
- Documenting supervisory visits by completing appropriate forms for submission to the university throughout and at the end of each practicum/field experience.